

REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICERS
OF
THE LUNATIC ASYLUM
FOR THE
County of Lancaster.

INSTITUTED 28TH JULY, 1816.

LANCASTER :
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TO THE

VISITING JUSTICES

OF THE

LANCASTER COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUM.

THE Medical Officers of the Lancaster County Lunatic Asylum have pleasure in submitting their yearly report to the Committee of Visitors.

During the twelve months ending on the 23rd June last, 213 patients,—90 men and 123 women,—have been admitted. The average number for the year being 768.

The subjoined tables exhibit a considerable increase in the number of recoveries, and decrease in deaths, in comparison with the last year. Such a record would, under any circumstances, be gratifying to those entrusted with the management of a large and crowded hospital for the insane ; but, it is a subject of no ordinary satisfaction and thankfulness that this result has been obtained among a class of patients such as are too often sent to this Asylum.

Complaints have repeatedly been made that persons labouring under bodily disease so advanced as to forbid all hope of recovery, are often brought to us. During the past year, two patients were admitted from a distant part of the county, both suffering from dropsy ; in whom the mental disturbance presented rather the features of ordinary delirium resulting from organic disease than insanity. In both instances, death took place within a month of their admission.

An increase of late in the number of cases presenting symptoms of general paralysis, has been remarked by us. Experience proves that this is, most commonly, an incurable form of disease; and very generally induced by sudden change of outward circumstances, or reverses of fortune. It is a malady which, ever since it has been recognised as associated with insanity, has engaged much of the attention of Medical Officers in charge of Asylums.

Although Asiatic cholera, of a virulent type, prevailed in the town of Lancaster to a great extent during the autumn of last year, there was not, providentially, a single case among our patients; even ordinary diarrhoea was less prevalent and severe than usual.

Our attention continues to be steadily directed to the carrying out of all those sanatory precautions, which, although seemingly trifling in detail, form essential parts of a general system, exercising a most beneficial influence both on the individual and general health of the large population within our walls.

Although we referred to these subjects in our last report, we may be permitted briefly to state again, that, all pains are taken in the removal of refuse matter as soon as possible, and in preventing vitiation of the atmosphere by miasmata from the drains and sewers, by careful trapping. As a consequence of the improved method of warming the building by steam, we are now better able to regulate the admission of fresh air into the galleries and their apartments, and thus, without sacrificing uniformity of temperature, to secure freer ventilation. The extensive grounds around the Asylum afford constant opportunity both for out door occupation and exercise to the patients.

By unremitting attention to these matters, and by the supply of warmer clothing as winter approaches, and a liberal allowance of animal food, we are thankful to believe that no small amount of additional comfort, both physical and mental, has been secured for our patients.

During several years, the accommodation for the insane poor of this populous county has been so inadequate as to produce a constantly increasing pressure of applications for admission.

With an earnest desire to lessen the evil, a greater number of patients have been received than is compatible with thoroughly effective sanatory regulations or good discipline. It is with much satisfaction, therefore, that the opening of the two new Asylums in the south of the county is looked forward to. When they are ready for the reception of patients, our institution will be gradually relieved from the pernicious consequences of over-crowding.

The supply of water from the spring on the moor, during the last summer, has been greater and more nearly commensurate with our wants than before : but, without occasional pumping from the recently sunk well, it is yet altogether inadequate.

Since we addressed the magistrates on the subject of "criminal lunatics," in March last, several patients have been sent hither under the Secretary of State's warrant, from various prisons in the county. We are thankful to know that the importance of a distinct provision for this class of insane persons still engages the active attention of the Visitors.

The close neighbourhood of the present burial-ground to the building, and the rate at which, owing to the increased population of the Asylum, it is filling up, has by its inconvenience, both in a moral and sanatory point of view, forced itself on our notice. In a plot of ground, containing little more than half an acre, consecrated in 1832, there have been buried already upwards of 1200 persons. The unoccupied space still remaining is very small; and even if the enlargement of the present cemetery were possible from the nature of the ground, for obvious reasons, it is highly desirable that future burials should take place at a greater distance from the Asylum, and out of the sight of its inmates. We earnestly hope that the Visitors will shortly be able to devise means for the accomplishment of this important object.

The religious services in our Chapel continue to be conducted with all the good effects we have mentioned in former reports. The quiet and orderly demeanour of the patients during Divine worship is exemplary, and attendance at chapel is esteemed a privilege by most of them.

The Lunacy Commissioners visited the Asylum in October last, and made the following Report :—

“ Lancaster Asylum, Oct. 15, 1849.

“ Since the last visit of the Commissioners, on the 29th August, 1848, 243 patients have been admitted (110 being in bad or feeble health at the time of admission), 127 have been discharged, and 103 have died,—19 deaths being ascribed to disease of the brain, 18 to paralysis, 15 to consumption, 11 to epilepsy, and the rest to various other causes.

“ There are now 768 patients in the Asylum, of whom 382 are males, and 386 are females. Forty-five of these (24 males and 21 females), are recorded as being under medical treatment. No patient is subjected to mechanical coercion. About 14 of them appear to have been recently placed in seclusion, during various short periods of time ; but there were only two (namely, one of each sex) secluded at the time of our visit.

“ The patients were tranquil during our progress through the wards (with the exception of the two who were secluded), and appeared to be very comfortable. The body-clothing was good, the bedding clean and apparently ample, and the day-rooms, bedrooms, and galleries well ventilated and in very good condition.

“ The new domestic offices (which are exceedingly spacious and convenient) are now in use.

“ The Church-service is read every Sunday, and is attended by from 230 to 240 of the patients. Prayers are also read twice a week, and are attended by about 100 of the patients of both sexes.

“ About 630 of the patients are employed (the number of females rather exceeding that of the males) in various ways, and invariably with good effect.

“ The dietary, which had previously been somewhat diminished during the summer months, has, throughout this year, continued

the same as in winter, owing to the existence of the cholera in the country.

“ We beg to suggest for the consideration of the Visiting Justices, the expediency of warming some of the lower portions of the building, more particularly on the female-side.

“ The state of the Asylum is at present very satisfactory ; the whole appearing to us to be under careful and judicious superintendence on both sides of the establishment.

[SIGNED]

“ B. W. PROCTER, } *Commissioners*
 “ SAMUEL GASKELL, } *in Lunacy.*”

It is satisfactory again to advert to the feeling of harmony and unanimity of purpose which exists amongst all our officers and servants, animating all alike to that exertion which can alone secure the prosperity and well-being of a large establishment : and at the same time, in no slight degree, contributing to lighten individual responsibility, and lessen the monotony of the discharge of duties which are often painful, and always onerous.

We would desire before closing our report, to offer our earnest thanks to the Visitors for the readiness with which they have always listened to our suggestions of improvement, their liberality in carrying out our views in the management of the Asylum, and the continued confidence they have invariably manifested towards us.

EDWD. D. DE VITRÉ, M. D.

JOHN BROADHURST,

Surgeon and Superintendent.

*County Lunatic Asylum,
 July, 1850.*

ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES THIS YEAR COMPARED
WITH THE LAST:—

	Admitted.	Cured.	Dead.	By request.	Escaped.	Total Discharged	Average Number.	Per Centage of Deaths.	Per Centage of Cures.
1849—June 23	205	63	91	6	..	160	767	11.86	8.21
1850—June 23	213	95	86	43	1	225	768	11.20	12.37

DURATION OF TREATMENT OF PATIENTS DISCHARGED
CURED.

Under 3 Months	22	Under 4 Years	1
„ 6 „	29	„ 7 „	1
„ 9 „	16	„ 8 „	1
„ 12 „	11	„ 9 „	2
„ 18 „	4		
„ 2 Years	3	Total	95
„ 3 „	5		

CAUSES OF DEATH.

From June, 1849, to June, 1850.

	Men.	Women
Disease of Brain or its Membranes.....	7	9
Ditto, with General Paralysis.....	11	3
General Debility	2	8
Epilepsy	9	2
Consumption	6	6
Apoplexy .....	..	1
Exhaustion	3	1
Abscess in Pharynx .....	...	1
Glossitis	1	..
Anasarca .....	...	3
Effusion on Chest.....	...	1
Valvular Disease of Heart .....	...	1
Hæmoptysis .....	...	1
Pleurisy.....	2	..
Bronchitis.....	1	1
Disease of Uterus and Hæmorrhage .....	...	2
Fever .....	...	1
Diarrhœa	1	1
Scrofulous Disease of Spine	1	..
	44	42

A RETURN SHEWING THE NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS IN THE COUNTY ASYLUM, AND THOSE DISCHARGED, OR AT PRESENT REMAINING IN THE HOUSE.

Year.	Admitted.	Cured.	Dead.	Request.	Total Discharged	In the House.
1845—6.....	169	38	35	51	124	45
1846—7.....	141	56	35	8	99	42
1847—8.....	259	92	64	20	176	83
1848—9	205	62	41	13	116	89
1849—50	213	47	16	5	68	145
	987	295	191	97	583	404

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CLOTHING MADE BY THE WOMEN PATIENTS.

From June, 1849, to June, 1850.

Shirts	884	Trowsers	362
Shifts	536	Quilted rugs	525
Flannels	888	Quilted night dresses	45
Petticoats	901	Knitted stockings	389
Gowns.....	30	Knitted boots.....	316
Bed gowns	470	Netted caps	64
Caps.....	822	Netted borders	80
Aprons..	972	Pairs cloth boot tops	123
Handkerchiefs	678	Pairs leather shoes bound ..	366
Stays	102	Dusters	656
Vests for Women	103	Shrouds	86
Bonnets	102	Table cloths	49
Drawers	149	Window blinds	40
Stocks.....	315	Mattresses	54
Bed ticks	572	Counterpanes hemmed ..	40
Pillow ticks	92	Shawls.....	42
Pillow cases	625	Curtains	28
Sheets	685	Door mats	40
Towels.....	206	Hearth rugs	6
Jackets	75	Chair covers	27
Waistcoats	125	Table covers	11

EXTRACT FROM THE DAILY ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF
THE PATIENTS.—JUNE, 1850.

M E N .

EMPLOYED.	Thursday, 20th.		Friday, 21st.		Saturday, 22nd.	
	Morn.	Aft.	Morn.	Aft.	Morn.	Aft.
Working in the Garden	5	5	5	5	5	5
„ „ Land	45	66	43	62	45	45
„ „ Airing Courts ..	..	..	2	..	2	2
Pumping	17	16	15	14	5	14
Assisting Joiners	4	4	4	4	4	4
„ Plumber	1	1	1	1	1	1
„ Shoemakers	8	9	8	8	8	8
„ Tailors	3	3	6	6	6	6
„ in the Kitchen	6	6	6	6	6	6
„ Baker and Brewer ..	4	4	4	4	4	4
Cleaning Galleries	112	73	111	69	109	84
Plaiting Straw	20	23	20	25	22	22
Making Mats	3	3	5	5	5	4
Picking Flocks	21	17	19	23	21	19
Other in-door Work	53	53	49	62	50	71
Crushing Sand	2	10	2	3	3	3
Weaving	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Employed.....	305	294	301	298	297	299
UNEMPLOYED.						
Excitement with Restraint .....	..	..	..	..	..	..
„ without Restraint ..	3	3	3	3	3	3
„ with Seclusion	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sick	8	8	8	8	8	8
Quiet	66	77	77	73	75	73
Total Unemployed....	78	89	82	85	87	85
Admissions .....	..	..	..	..	1	..
Death and Discharges .....	..	..	..	..	...	...
Total	383	383	383	383	384	384

EXTRACT FROM THE DAILY ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF
THE PATIENTS.—JUNE, 1850.

W O M E N .

EMPLOYED.	Thursday, 20th.		Friday, 21st.		Saturday, 22nd.	
	Morn.	Aft.	Morn.	Aft.	Morn.	Aft.
Cleaning in the Galleries	80	50	90	60	90	60
Assisting in the Kitchen	7	7	7	7	7	7
Peeling Potatoes	16	16	16	16	16	16
Washing and Ironing	52	52	50	50	40	40
Making Jackets, &c.	12	12	10	10	12	12
Binding Boots	2	2	2	2	2	2
Making Stocks	1	1	1	1	2	2
Sewing and Quilting	70	100	70	100	70	100
Knitting and Netting	30	30	30	30	30	30
Mending Stockings	10	10	10	10	10	10
Picking Flocks	30	30	30	30	40	40
Working in the Garden	8	8	8	8	10	10
Total Employed.	318	318	324	324	329	329
UNEMPLOYED.						
Excited, with Restraint . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..
„ with Seclusion	1	1	1	1	1	1
„ without Seclusion	5	5	5	5	4	4
Sick	18	18	18	18	18	18
Quiet	54	54	48	48	44	44
Total Unemployed	78	78	72	72	67	67
Admissions
Discharges and Deaths
Total	396	396	396	396	396	396

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